

Why I believe Rampion 2 should not be given approval.

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Littlehampton is a pretty sad area really. As with so many places, post Covid and Amazon, we have many empty shops in the town centre and low footfall partly because we have so few shops and partly because the type of shops which are opening are targeted at a very narrow section of society.

Namely Tattooists (3) Nail Salons (4) Hair dressers (3) Barbers (6) betting shops (3), vaping shops (4), charity shops (6) and various takeaways.

We have a Lidl, a small Iceland and a smallish Sainsbury's. We also have a wonderful, but tiny, sports shop, established in 1946. Plus a Tackle and outfitters shop for anglers.

The only greengrocers has closed down. The dry-cleaners is closing down, No banks, No clothes shops, no shoe shops, no stylish anything shops at all.

BUT we have the beach, with a stunning sea view.

We have life guards along one stretch - so safer for families.

We have a fab café on the front with two terraces and lots of windows overlooking the sea, with Yoga at sunrise, sailboard and surfboard lessons, music and other events.

Opposite this café is our excellent new sports centre, The Wave, with many machines on its fully glazed first floor training room facing the sea.

We also are fortunate to have another stylish, architect designed (Thomas Heatherwick) restaurant on the beach front, also glass-fronted to enjoy the sea and the horizon.

And we have a wonderfully long promenade from Rustington to the quite new harbour-fronted development beside the Arun river entrance.

As I said in my nervous 'statement' on February 6th, Littlehampton has been given a 'Levelling Up' grant of £7,234,201, to improve the amenities at the green along the western end of the East Beach seafront.

On the West beach, the other side of the Arun, the sandy shore is more extensive and there are dunes –

It is a lot quieter here, as there is little parking, and to get there you must either walk across the footbridge and then all along the mouth of the Arun, or catch a, summer months only, little ferry, or drive around to the other side of the river. But it is lovely for its more secluded nature, and from West Beach you can walk along the beach to Climping which is an SSSI. Climping Gap supports important populations of wintering birds. Notably numbers of wintering Sanderling, which, in particular, are of European significance.

I say all this because I want you to realise that our seafront is our Golden Asset and greatly appreciated by both the residents and the many visitors who come all year around, especially when the sun is out, and not only in the summer. From the beach you can watch the sun as it rises, and later, the setting sun sinks into the watery western horizon. On bonfire night we congregate on the beach to see the fireworks exploding into the sky.

We appreciate the long natural views to our horizon, often animated with paddle-boarders passing by, or little boats, but mainly with birds. Wind surfing and Sail boarding are both hugely popular, and watching the boarders fly into the sky is wonderfully exhilarating. All with a largely natural backdrop – though somewhat marred, by Rampion 1 to the East which we must now live with. But, if you look straight ahead, or to the west you can pretend it isn't there.

The Kelp Forests, encouraged by Sir David Attenborough, who backed the campaign to save them from destruction, have been slowly re-establishing themselves all along the Sussex bay since the trawler ban. BBC South posted a video narrated by Sir David, in Autumn 2019, which you can still watch on line. It begins:

“Off our coasts there are magical underwater forests. These underwater forests are among the most productive places on earth, supporting a huge range of marine life. The forests are vital nursery grounds, giving sanctuary to the young of many commercial fish as they feed and hide among its fronds. And if you are lucky you might glimpse a common cuttlefish, or the exceedingly rare short-snouted seahorse. In fact these forests are so special that they are one of the of the most biodiverse environments on the planet”

RWE have been so so canny. Well, they are being paid well and much is at stake. Including a lot of British taxpayers' money. I trust that the application will be treated fairly and with consideration to all who will be affected by it, including those who fly or swim and have no voice.

I find it bewildering that so many people voted for Brexit, only to discover that non UK organisations had been invited to obliterate our coast line in a way that no European country would allow. And this, at a time when they are dismantling turbines in Germany.

I also found it extraordinary that RWE evidently employed and handsomely paid all those British 'specialists' who turned up at the meeting representing Rampion 2. Clever. Not a foreign accent amongst them. Clever too that RWE have so played to the British desire to do the right thing and save the planet, that they have, by being so polished, exaggerating any benefits and not even illustrating their horrifying proposal, convinced most of the public they have no cause for concern. ...

And strangely, so very few people even realise what is about to arrive on their doorstep. Hence the almost empty room at the consultation. After all, RWE suggest it's just an 'extension' of Rampion 1. It's for the best. Your electricity will be cheaper. There will be more jobs. It will be beautiful, people will come from miles to admire it. Really?

Protect Coastal Sussex (P.C.S.) has spent months researching the reality of what harms this wind-farm would cause. They have also a member who has considerable expertise and international experience in 'Energy'. This member has outlined the three more reliable and just as readily available alternatives.

90 gigantic wind turbines installed along the Sussex Coast would not be the solution to our energy requirements. There are other more reliable and far less destructive options.

I sincerely hope that you will NOT recommend approval.